

OUR CRITICS.

There appears to be a disposition on the part of the "many headed" to bewail the quality, or rather the lack thereof, of our editorial comment. Our critics assert, and doubtless they speak from experience, that no man reads a scientific article, unless haply he hath himself written it. What your "constant reader" turns to are the short editorials which occupy the first three or four pages of each issue of this JOURNAL. They urge the importance of having these columns light, breezy, entertaining, contentious. Now, the field within which we must confine our editorial activities is necessarily a narrow one, but as though that were not difficulty enough, please note the further restrictions we must observe if, lumping all and sundry protests, we would offend nobody. Our critics would have us eschew politics or reference to the actions of politicians, even when these bear directly upon matters medical. They weary alike of "fulminations against vendors of proprietary nostrums" and "impersonal diatribes directed at illegal practitioners." Not less deadly do they find the "ponderous digests" of foreign medical publications which "masquerade as editorials" in the *Journal of the A. M. A.* Finally, from the "conservative and ultra-conventional pronouncements" of our distinguished contemporaries the *Lancet* and the *Journal of the B. M. A.*, they turn them away. They profess Wagner, but their ear is attuned to ragtime. They do not wish to be instructed. They dread to be exhorted. They would be amused. But that is really a large undertaking. Said Garrick, "I am always ready for tragedy at any hour of the day or night. But comedy! Ah, that is a serious matter!" Reflection would seem to show that our critics have collectively debarred us from discussing about everything except personalities. To be sure, personalities are always entertaining—at least, to those who are, to use a slang expression, "in the know." But not one man in a generation can deal in them without giving offense. One may recall with pleasure the placid smile with which Addison invited us to view the foibles of our neighbors, the while we knew that in the next issue of the *Spectator* we might find him wearing the same gentle smile and laying bare our own. However, the eighteenth century produced but one Addison,* while the nineteenth and thus far the twentieth have produced none at all. Thinking these thoughts we have felt constrained to remind our readers that this is not *our* journal but *your* JOURNAL. And that our columns are open to anyone who has a live thought on a live subject and is able to put the same into live English. To those who simply find fault without attempting to help us in our effort to better the JOURNAL we would commend for their serious consideration the following definition: Criticism is the art of telling another how he ought to have done what you could not do yourself.

*The individual here referred to is not the immortal discoverer of Addison's disease.—S. N. I.

GOOD TREATMENT FOR INSURANCE COMPANY.

Most generally, it is because we physicians tolerate the imposition that we are imposed upon. Five dollars is little enough to receive for an examination for life insurance, and if no physician would make such an examination for a less sum, why, \$5.00 would be the minimum fee. That seems a simple argument and an incontrovertible. And yet, as a matter of fact, we know many physicians are doing the work for \$3.00 or less. Some, if not all, of the accident and casualty companies issue schedules of the fees they "allow" the physician for examining their insured, or for treating them, or operating upon them, and more than once has the JOURNAL commented upon the absurdly small amounts thus "allowed." Here and there, however, we find a doctor with spine enough to stand up for his just fees and demand them—or refuse to accept the amount "allowed." An instance of that sort has recently come to our attention, and is worth putting in the printed record. The agent of the New Amsterdam Casualty Co. asked a doctor in one of the interior towns to examine a man insured in his company, which was done and the final blank filled out and sent in with a bill for the fee of \$2.00. In reply a letter was received, a portion of which is as follows: "From assured's proof of loss we presume you were Mr. —'s family physician. We therefore regret that this bill is not for our attention." A little later this same company sent the same physician another man insured by them, but this time the doctor wrote to the company, after declining to examine the patient on the ground that he was not the patient's physician, a letter in part as follows: "Having in fresh memory your refusal to pay my fee in the case of Mr. —, I must therefore return to you the enclosed examination blank with your own sublime and sad expression, 'This is not for our attention.'"

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION.

At the last annual meeting of the State Society, the following amendment to the constitution was introduced, and under the rules laid over till next year: Amend Section 4 of Article V of the Constitution to read as follows: "The selection of the place of meeting shall be determined by the Council and its announcement followed by the election of officers shall be the first order of business of the House of Delegates at the second evening session of each annual meeting." Under the constitution as it is at present, the place of meeting is determined by the House of Delegates. Presumably, the purpose of the proposed amendment is to save time; under it the various places that might ask for the meeting for the following year could address their requests to the Council, the Council could take time to look into them, see if proper hotel and other accommodations were requisite, and then decide. It might be well for the various county units to consider this proposed amendment and be in a position to advise their delegates how to vote upon it at the meeting at Santa Barbara next April.